

REMARKS

Claims 17-19 are now pending in the application. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hollstein et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,248,379 in view of Minoura et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,050,498). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assertion that Hollstein discloses a purging method "in which a series of valves flushes the venturi pump and conduit 51a". The corresponding specification citation at column 7, lines 3-22 teaches a time delay between the closure of a pinch valve at the powder source (e.g., valve 20a) and the deenergization of the solenoids controlling powder conveying air through the venturi pump and pinch valve at the manifold inlet for the color being used. There is no purge fitting having a port in fluid communication with a source of cleaning fluid, as called for in Applicants' independent claim 17. Hollstein, rather than positively "purging", simply relies on the normal conveying air to allegedly carry out residual powder in the manifold pinch valve and conduit 51a to avoid puffing problems in subsequent cycles. Hollstein only teaches purging of the central passageway of the manifold.

It should also be noted, therefore, that by modifying Hollstein via Minoura to provide a single pump at the outlet would remove Holstein's conveying fluid path to the color pinch valve and inlet conduit to the manifold.

Claims 17-19 are believed to be in condition for allowance over the combination of Hollstein and Minoura et al.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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